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Date: 7/9/2012

GAIN Report Number: MX2047

Mexico

Post: Mexico

Genetically Enhanced Corn Events Approved for Pilot Stage

Report Categories:

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

Grain and Feed

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Report Highlights:

On June 29, 2012, the Government of Mexico (GOM) announced the approval of three pilot permits for genetically enhanced (GE) corn to be grown on 1,006 hectares in the state of Tamaulipas. This development is significant as GE corn had only previously been planted under the experimental stage in Tamaulipas. Based on Mexico's Biosafety Law, transgenic seeds must go through three different testing phases: experimental, pilot and commercial.

General Information:

On June 28, 2012, the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food (SAGARPA) through the National Service of Health, Food Safety, and Food Quality (SENASICA) published [updated information](#) on the status of 2012 requests for environmental release of genetically enhanced crops. Of significance was the approval of three new pilot permits for genetically enhanced (GE) corn to be grown on 1,006 hectares (HA) in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. Based on Mexico's Biosafety Law, all transgenic seeds must go through three different testing phases: experimental, pilot, and commercial. While this represents an important process step, it is important to note that Mexico has yet to approve a biotech corn variety for commercial production.

Table 1. GE Corn Approved for Release in Pilot Stage; Tamaulipas

Event	Trait	Release Locations	Area Allowed (Ha)
MON-00603-6	Tolerance to glyphosate herbicide	Reynosa, Río Bravo, Valle Hermoso and Matamoros.	335.53
MON-89034-3 x MON-00603-6	Protection against some Lepidoptera and tolerance to glyphosate herbicide	Reynosa, Río Bravo, Valle Hermoso and Matamoros.	335.53
MON-89034-3 x MON-88017-3	Protection against some Lepidoptera and Coleoptera, tolerance to glyphosate herbicide	Reynosa, Río Bravo, Valle Hermoso and Matamoros.	335.53

From 2005 to 2011, the GOM has granted 145 environmental release permits for experimental testing and 7 permits for pilot stage of GE corn under the Biosafety Law and its implementation rules (Reglamento).

Table 2. GE Corn Permits for Environmental Release in Mexico Since 2005

Year	Permits	Area permitted (Ha)	Area released (Ha)	Applicants (Centers of Research or Companies)
2005	7 Experimental	0.87	0.87	3
	33 Experimental	14.5	5.07	2
2009	67 Experimental	59.27	5.54	4
	1 Pilot	0.24	0	1
2010	38 Experimental	38.66	No data	3
	6 Pilot	71.03	No data	3

2012

Source: SENASICA and the National Information System for Bio-safety and Biotechnology: <http://www.cibiogem.gob.mx/OGMs/Paginas/Permisos.aspx> and <http://www.senasica.gob.mx/?id=4443>.
Information as of June 2012.

Since 1988, GOM information regarding requests and permits for environmental release on experimental, pilot and commercial stages of biotech crops can be found on the Inter-ministerial Commission for Bio-safety of Genetically Modified Organisms ([CIBIOGEM](#)) website.

FAS/MEXICO Comments:

The recent approval of 3 pilot GE corn events is another step in Mexico's cautious approach towards biotechnology policy. The recent controversy regarding soybeans and honey (see GAIN MX2041) is an example of the overall sensitivity surrounding the development of biotechnology in Mexico.

For More Information

FAS/Mexico Web Site: We are available at www.mexico-usda.com or visit the FAS headquarters' home page at www.fas.usda.gov for a complete selection of FAS worldwide agricultural reporting.

Other Relevant Reports Submitted by FAS/Mexico:

Report Number	Subject	Date Submitted
MX2041	Honey Producers Fear Advances in Biotechnology	7/5/2012
MX2035	Genetically-Enhanced Soybeans Approved for Commercial Use	6/8/2012
MX2017	Mexico Approves 4 Additional GE Corn Pilot Tests	3/25/2012
MX2001	GE Corn Pilot Tests Approved	1/6/2012
MX1100	Mapping Mexican Corn and Implications for Biotech Development	12/21/2011
MX1086	Biotech Corn Permits Being Reviewed-November Update	11/18/2011
MX1070	2011 Biotech Corn Permits Being Reviewed	9/20/2011
MX1056	2011 Biotech Annual: Mexico Authorizes First Commercial Biotech Cultivation	7/15/2011
MX1054	June Cotton Update	6/30/2011
MX1102	2010 Biotech Corn Permits Issued	1/26/2011

Useful Mexican Web Sites: Mexico's equivalent to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (SAGARPA) can be found at www.sagarpa.gob.mx, equivalent to the U.S. Department of Commerce (SE) can be found at www.economia.gob.mx and equivalent to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (SALUD) can be found at www.salud.gob.mx. The inter-secretarial commission for biosafety of GMO, that maintain the National Information System www.cibiogem.gob.mx. These web sites are mentioned for the readers' convenience but USDA does NOT in any way endorse, guarantee the accuracy of, or necessarily concur with, the information contained on the mentioned sites.

